The Head Change
A History of a Livermore, California Metal Band (1999–2000)

The known surviving band photograph of The Head Change, circa 1999–2000. From left to right: Dustin Cardwell (vocals), Andrew Kusske (guitar), Scott Fitzgerald (bass), and Omar Nieto (drums).

Band Summary

The Head Change was a four-piece metal band from **Livermore, California**, active during the late 1990s, primarily from **1999 to 2000**. Formed by four friends with a shared passion for heavy music, the band combined influences from alternative metal, groove metal, progressive metal, and hip-hop to create an original sound shaped by the diverse musical landscape of the era.

The lineup consisted of **Dustin Cardwell** (vocals), **Andrew Kusske** (guitar), **Scott Fitzgerald** (bass), and **Omar Nieto** (drums). Andrew Kusske and Scott Fitzgerald shared songwriting duties while Dustin Cardwell wrote the band's lyrics. Their influences included Deftones, Machine Head, Tool, Rage Against the Machine, Bone Thugs-n-Harmony, Mudvayne, and Pantera.

In 1999, The Head Change recorded a three-song demo in a friend's garage studio, reflecting the do-it-yourself spirit common among independent metal bands of the time. Two known songs from the demo are **Ether** and **Overview**; the title of the third song has been lost to time.

The band performed locally in the East Bay, including appearances at **Pine Street Bar** in Livermore. Like many independent bands of the pre-social-media era, The Head Change left very little digital footprint. This archive was created from the firsthand recollections of founding vocalist Dustin Cardwell to preserve the band's history, music, and the contributions of all four members, including bassist and songwriter **Scott Fitzgerald (1981–2021)**.

Members

• Dustin Cardwell – Lead vocals, lyricist
• Andrew Kusske – Guitar, songwriter
• Scott Fitzgerald – Bass, songwriter
• Omar Nieto – Drums